CONFERENCE connection
Alabama · Georgia
Mississippi · South Carolina · Tennessee · NW Florida
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

February 1, 2021

Vaccines Offer Hope, But...

COVID-19 vaccines were the focus of our recent Zoom Conversation about Re-Opening Churches for In-Person worship. Dr. Boghuma Titanji, who works with infectious diseases at Emory University School of Medicine, shared very helpful information about the vaccines, how they work, issues around distribution, etc.

The question was raised about the impact of the vaccines on the possibilities of in-person worship. I want to share two comments: 1) Churches will be safe to re-open for in-person worship when whoever wants the vaccine can get it – with the goal of 80% of the population – and the numbers trend down for both new cases and deaths; 2) But even then, it will be important to wear a mask and social distance.

This latter statement is important to remember because it is hard to determine who has actually been vaccinated. In addition, there are still questions about whether those who have been vaccinated can spread the virus (studies are continuing). And of course, it is important to model good practices for everyone.

Bottom line – for the months ahead local church leaders still need to carefully make decisions based on the health and safety of parishioners in regard to worship. Most of our congregations should definitely not consider in-person worship! With additional mutant strains of the coronavirus which are even more contagious, additional caution is needed.

Pastors who are getting exhausted with creating online worship, be sure to

consider resources that might be helpful. The UCC Global Ministries are providing virtual sermons and conversations by Missionaries that would provide a wonderful opportunity to introduce the congregation to our global ministry work. Also, remember that I am willing to join your congregation virtually with a sermon or greeting.

We can do this! Meanwhile, God continues to bless us with many visions of new possibilities.

Blessings! Char Burch
Transitional Conference Minister

News from the Conference Office

UCC Yearbook - Now is the Time!!!

Now's the time to submit your information for Annual Church Yearbook reporting. The UCC Data Hub is now open and you can enter your information. Emails were sent to each church with specifics as well as hard copies were mailed this week. If you have questions, or your church did not receive its yearbook information, please email Heather at hfosburgh@secucc.org. More information is also available on our website. Please note, the national setting has been having some trouble with the website, so if the Data Hub is not working when you try to enter your information, please try again a little later.

Winter 2021 Grant Applications

In July 2009, we launched the **Transforming Churches - Transforming Lives** campaign with the goal of raising money that would help carry the Southeast Conference into a new phase of growth and renewal, building on the remarkable progress achieved during the prior decade. For the last number of years, we have been in the distribution of funds phase of the campaign.

Transforming Churches • Transforming Lives
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

For the Winter 2021 grant cycle we began accepting applications on January 20 for grants. **This cycle will end March 3, 2021.** There are a few steps to keep in mind before applying:

- If you **have been awarded a grant in the past**, please make sure your "Project Evaluation Form" has been completed and submitted. This form can be found on our website. This is necessary and needed before your application can be considered.
- Please read and follow the guidelines (these can be found on the application form).
- **A detailed budget** should be submitted with the application. This is most important.
- If at all possible, please submit your application **before the deadline date.** That allows for any questions or concerns to be addressed prior to the deadline.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Generosity Coordinator Carrole Moss at cmoss@secucc.org.

Annual Clergy Information Review

Calling all Ministers: Ordained, Licensed, and Commissioned! The time has come once again for you to fill out your Annual Information Review. This year's form, which looks back on 2020, helps the Conference and the National Setting have the correct and current information on you and your ministry. It also allows the Conference to identify how we can better support you in your ministry. Please either fill out the form online or download and fill in the PDF and return it to the Conference Office by February 28.

Opportunities to Serve within the SEC Conference

Perhaps you are seeking a way to become more involved in the ministry that happens on behalf of the Southeast Conference. If so, we are seeking both clergy and lay members for the following Conference Committees. These are positions appointed by the Board of Directors and can be filled immediately: Personnel Committee, Commission on Ministry Teams,

Finance Committee. If interested, please complete a Nominations Form here: https://www.secucc.org/resources/nominations-form/

Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

- **Monday, February 22, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**
  We will gather at the end of January to reflect on pandemic changes and how they might impact the life of our local churches. There is also the question about what current practices churches might maintain into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. REGISTER

Clergy Zoom Connections for January

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
  Tuesday, February 2, 9, 16, 23 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/479440102
- **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**
  Thursday, February 18- 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)
  20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at HeartSongJean@gmail.com.)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/96976838422
- **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
  Tuesday, February 23, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/354744689

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2020. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of January 31

- Safe Harbor Family Church UCC; Clinton, Mississippi
- Dwight Andrews
- Robin Lee Fitch
- Gail McGill
- Jodi Yarini
- John R. Pearson

Week of February 7

- Garden of Grace UCC; Columbia, South Carolina
- Thomas Eckert
- Susan Mitchell
- Helen Smith
- Patricia Greeves
- Christophe Ringer

Week of February 14

- Central Congregational UCC; Atlanta, Georgia
- Southeast Conference Board of Directors
- Henrietta Andrews
- Betsy Taylor Flory
- Truman Moore

- Charlene Burch

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN

News from the Wider Church

Important Copyright Infringement Information

In the last issue of the *Conference Connection*, UCC General Counsel, Heather Kimmel, shared information related to the Paycheck Protection Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act updates. She has recently shared important information regarding copyright and streaming of music. See more on our website.

UCC Program Grants and Scholarships

When looking for program grants and scholarships for local churches and for individuals, be sure to check the UCC website: https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-we-give/scholarships-grants/

Introduce the Global Mission Work of the UCC to your congregation!

Now is a great time to invite a mission co-worker to virtually visit your congregation for a sermon, a moment of mission, or a Sunday School. For more information: https://www.globalministries.org/missionary_visits/

Local Church News

Trip to Back Bay Mission Scheduled for November 2021

Back Bay Mission in Biloxi MS welcomes groups for work camp mission trip experiences geared for any age over 18. In 2017 there were nine folks from Pleasant Hill Community Church who took part in "doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly" with marginalized brothers and sisters along the Gulf Coast.

Another opportunity is coming up on November 7-13, 2021. (A 2020 planned trip was canceled and this trip can also be canceled anytime.) The cost is $250 per person which includes six overnights and mission materials for the week. Travel and food are planned by the group. It's an ideal experience for "senior" mission trippers. The Pleasant Hill church is inviting others from the Southeast Conference to join the group (up to 20 people).

For more information go to www.thebackbaymission.org. If you are interested in the trip, contact Co-Leaders Mary Ruth (931-787-7914) who serves on the Board of Directors at Back Bay Mission and Vivian Adzaku (vivanera1@yahoo.com).

Trainings and Conferences

Healthy Boundaries 101

4/30/2021, Friday, 1:45-5:15 pm– Part 1

- Boundary Basics
- Power & Vulnerability
- Dating, Friends, Dual Relationships, Gifts

5/1/2021, Saturday, 8:45 am-12:15 pm – Part 2

- The Pulpit, Transference, Hugging/Touch, Intimacy
- Emerging Issues
- Self-Care

Both sessions required

This ZOOM workshop meets requirements for regular clergy boundaries training of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia.

Register no later than April 16, 2021.

- Registration fee is $75 and includes materials.
- A smartphone, tablet, or computer with a camera is required.
- Materials will be mailed to you in advance.
- You will be contacted by email before the event with further information.
- Learn more and register at https://forms.gle/XS29sZfqpx1GfcX6A

Heartland UCC Virtual Faith Formation Conference

The Heartland UCC Conference (formerly the Ohio UCC Conference) extends an open invitation to all who would like to participate in a two-day virtual faith formation conference on February 26 and 27. The conference will involve presentations as well as small group working sessions and large group discussions. The theme this year is "Live it - Engaging the Sacred Texts Through the Lenses of Cultures." The Keynote Speaker is The Rev. Dr. Velda Love, Minister of Racial Justice, Justice and Local Church Ministries-UCC. The cost is $25. Click here to register. Registration will close in mid-February. Register early, the first 50 or so will receive a goodie box in the mail.

From Roots to Shoots: AUCE @ 50

You Are Invited to 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Association of United Church Educators: From Roots to Shoots: AUCE @ 50. Celebrating the past, looking to the future, held on February 13, 2021. AUCE members and friends are invited to help us celebrate 50 years and beyond with special guests, Rev. Molly Baskette, Melvin Bray, Mark Miller, and Walter & Kassie Runsabove. All are welcome! Click here for details and to register.

Conference Calendar

January 20 - March 3
Spring 2021 Grant Applications Open

February 2 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

February 4 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST
Commission on Ministry Meeting

February 9 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

February 16 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

February 18 @ 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm EST
Live Harp Meditations for Ministers

February 18 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST
Commission on Ministry Meeting

February 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST
Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

February 23 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EST
Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers

View the **full calendar** of events online: https://www.secucc.org/events/

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch;** cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh;** hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss;** cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris;** dharris@secucc.org

Copyright © 2021 Southeast Conference, UCC, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

mailchimp